October 14, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Ralph A. Dungan
Special Assistant to the President
The White House

We understand that certain commercial radio stations are exerting pressure on the FCC to close down the Agency station broadcasting to Cuba from Marathon, Florida and the Navy-operated station transmitting these VOA programs from Sugar Loaf, Florida. While we have no intention of closing down these stations, we feel that you should have the background information on this matter.

Both stations began operation in November 1962, at the direction of the President, as part of the broadcasting effort in the Cuban crisis. Standard broadcasting is used since the majority of Cuban radio receivers tune only to this band. Recent monitoring conducted in and around Cuba confirms the effectiveness of both stations.

Political considerations point to the necessity for continuance of these broadcasting operations. Since Cuba remains a serious trouble spot, we should avoid any indication that the U.S. is lessening its concern there. This, of course, has important domestic as well as foreign policy overtones.

One problem in this matter is that these Government operations are in the standard broadcast band, which is used by commercial broadcasters for domestic coverage in this country. However, the two Government stations in Florida are using highly directional antennas and are providing protection to the United States commercial stations which are operating on these frequencies, namely WHO Des Moines, Iowa on 1040 kcs and WHAM Rochester, New York on 1180 kcs. During the initial operation some interference was experienced by WHAM Rochester but this has now been eliminated. There is, nevertheless, latent feeling in some broadcasting circles against our presence on these frequencies.

Nevertheless, we propose to continue to broadcast from both stations indefinitely since in our judgment it is in the national interest.

Donald M. Wilson
Acting Director